

Ambassador Feinstein's Remarks at Lodz University's
Department of Transatlantic Studies
March 24, 2011

It is a real pleasure to be here at Lodz University and at the Department of Transatlantic and Mass Media Studies. I want to thank Director Oleksy for inviting me.

I also have to say that I owe Drs. Oleksy a great debt. Not only have they run this wonderful department which is very unique in Poland and has contributed so much to transatlantic ties for twenty years now; but we are also proud and grateful to have department graduates working at the U.S. Embassy, such as Paulina Chorazewska, Ewa Bukrewicz, and Grzegorz Gortat. So I hope some of you in the room today will consider contributing directly to transatlantic relations by working at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, or perhaps at the Polish Embassy in Washington.

Today, I'll talk about how the bilateral U.S.-Polish relationship is stronger and deeper than it has been at any point in our rich history. President Obama's announcement this week that he will visit Poland in May for his third meeting with President Komorowski is a clear signal of the strength of this relationship. But to help you understand the context of our alliance, I'll also explain the Obama administration's foreign policy and the philosophy behind it. And I'll brief you on our transatlantic agenda with Europe and the latest events in Libya and North Africa. But I won't speak for too long, because I look forward to answering your questions.

You have picked an incredible moment to enter the field of international relations, as we watch developments in north Africa and the Middle East unfold. And, you are studying in a country and in a part of the world that has an indispensable role to play. As the mass media shows us images of the upheaval in the Middle East, Poland, the United States and Europe are essential in assisting new governments develop democratic institutions and practices.

As you know, the United States is part of a broad international coalition taking part in a limited military action enforcing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 to protect Libyan civilians from the vicious attacks of their own government. President Barack Obama explained: “This is not an outcome that the United States or any of our partners sought... But we cannot stand idly by when a tyrant tells his people that there will be no mercy.” The United States is committed to working with the international community to protect the rights of citizens in Libya, Egypt and the entire region, just as we did for the citizens of Central Europe.

Today, Poland is a model for others to learn from. And, indeed, long before recent events unfolded, government officials and democracy activists from Afghanistan, Jordan, Egypt and elsewhere visited Poland to learn firsthand about Poland's successful transition to a true democracy and a booming economy. I hosted in my official residence in Warsaw last July activists from Egypt, many of whom were were leaders in the democracy movement in Tahrir square.

But let's take a step back and look at U.S. foreign policy since President Obama took office two years ago. He has pursued a policy based on "a new era of engagement." This approach argues that the best way to deal with today's challenges is by working with other states, international organizations and civil society.

Since you study mass media as well, you should know that the administration appreciates the impact of new media like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in giving citizens a voice around the world. If you haven't heard, our U.S. Embassy in Warsaw has a Facebook page and a Twitter account where we advertise events, hold trivia contests and more. We also have a YouTube channel with a video about U.S. visa procedures.

So what issues does the administration consider pressing?

Most important is building prosperity. No country can be strong abroad if its economy is not healthy. That is why President Obama has focused on increasing trade and strengthening the world financial system. The effort to combat violent extremism, including in Afghanistan and Pakistan, is crucial for all of us. Energy security, through diverse and environmentally-clean sources, is also fundamental.

The Obama administration is also dedicated to stopping proliferation in Iran and North Korea, while building partnerships with developing nations like China, India and Brazil. Finally, the Obama administration has sought a “new beginning” with Muslims around the world, including support for their democratic aspirations. We support democratic governments because it is right, but also because they are in our interest, because such states have proven more peaceful and economically prosperous. Poland, again, is one of the best examples of this, a historical triumph for which you should all be very proud.

This is a long list of challenges, which puts the importance of transatlantic relations front and center. The United States has no better partner than Europe, where we work with democratic, prosperous, militarily-capable allies who share our values and share our interests.

Let me tell you just how close this partnership is: we are one another's major trading partners and foreign employer by far. Investment is over \$3 trillion a year and U.S.-EU trade accounts for almost 40 percent of world trade. In Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary alone, U.S. firms have invested twice as much (\$85 billion) as in India. The United States and EU also provide roughly 80 percent of the world's development assistance. Even in broad public opinion, the story is good. Pew polling shows 73 percent approval of the United States in Europe, the highest it has ever been.

But what exactly is the Obama administration policy towards Europe? Actually, we have three overarching objectives in our engagement, and Central European countries like Poland play a key role in each of them. Whether the issue is promoting democracy in Europe's East, guaranteeing energy security for the whole continent, contributing to the EU's efforts to address major global challenges, or the NATO effort to secure Afghanistan, the energy, ideas and commitment of Central Europe is something we look to and rely on in pursuing our common goals.

First, we work with Europe to meet global challenges. Together, we are vastly stronger in terms of legitimacy, resources and ideas. The United States therefore supports a strong Europe, including an important role for Poland in Europe.

Second, the United States is committed to helping finish the historic project of building a Europe that is prosperous, whole and free. You brought about an extraordinarily successful democratic transition in Poland and Central Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain here, and now your example and your assistance are crucial to promoting and consolidating democracy in your neighbors to the east.

Third, America has sought to improve relations with Russia without compromising our principles or our alliances. We believe this more constructive course of diplomacy has already born fruit: a New START treaty, an important agreement for the transit of goods to Afghanistan, and cooperation on Iran.

Within Europe, America looks to Poland as a close ally and friend. Our bilateral relations are broad and deep, forged over more than two centuries of supporting each other in war and in peace.

As important as our history is building for the future. And we are doing that in many ways. Now that Poland is a strong NATO member and an increasingly influential EU member, an important part of our agenda today is working together to forge transatlantic unity. Poland is the eastern frontier of the EU and America is the western edge of the transatlantic space. Yet we tend to see the world through a similar lens. Together we can help build transatlantic solidarity. Our job is not to look for new divisions in Europe, but to build together a stronger Europe which can be a stronger ally and partner for the United States.

Today, Poland and the United States are concentrating on three essential areas: promoting democracy, expanding prosperity, and building our mutual security. Allow me now to briefly review these three key pillars of our relationship.

The United States and Poland are adding structure and substance to their common efforts to promote democracy around the world. Just three weeks ago, Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Sikorski announced the establishment of a democracy dialogue between our two countries. This is the only such formal dialogue America has with any country in the world.

In fact, the Secretary's senior advisor for Civil Society and Emerging Democracies was just in Poland this week to talk about joint efforts to support democracy in the Eastern Neighborhood and in the Middle East.

The United States and Poland can together send a powerful message of solidarity, something we have done recently with respect to Belarus, working with the European Union. We have coordinated an international conference in Warsaw, sanctions against the regime and support for civil society in response to Lukashenko's brutal crackdown on civil rights there.

Our cooperation on economic and energy issues, the second pillar of our relationship, is also growing quickly. America is the world's largest economy and Poland is the EU's fastest growing, so we have an opportunity to do business together.

Trade and investment between Poland and the United States is probably more than you think (including more than \$4.3 billion in investment since 2000), but not nearly enough. U.S. affiliate output in Poland in 2008 totaled \$8.3 billion, more than in Austria, Portugal or Denmark. U.S. investment in Poland has created over 130,000 jobs.

We also see eye-to-eye on energy security issues, where Poland has shown impressive leadership in the past few years. Several weeks ago, Secretary Clinton and Minister Sikorski inked a deal to formalize our partnership in clean energy, which already includes wind power and bio mass. Poland is a member of the Global Shale Gas Initiative and hosts a valuable annual shale gas conference here in Poland. We recently signed an agreement on civil nuclear cooperation, though many are rethinking nuclear energy after Japan. Secretary Clinton puts a very high priority on promoting energy diversity in Europe to ensure the security of supplies, competitive prices, and political independence.

The third pillar of our relationship, security, entails our commitment to each other's security as well as our joint efforts to address world security challenges. The United States plays a vital role in supporting Poland's transition to one of the most modern, professional militaries in the world. Poland currently receives three times as much U.S. foreign military financing as any other country in Europe, and a level of technology that the United States shares with only a few countries worldwide. Poland also receives millions of dollars for the training of hundreds of its soldiers in the United States every year—the 5th highest amount in the world. The new, permanent U.S. air detachment in Poland announced by Presidents Obama and Komorowski at the White House last December is another key step to ensure Poland's security.

Much of U.S. and Polish security cooperation occurs through the NATO alliance, and these bonds were again strengthened at the November Lisbon summit. At Lisbon, we adopted a new strategic concept that both helped the alliance prepare for the threats of the 21st century and reaffirmed our unwavering Article V commitment to Poland and all NATO allies. The NATO summit also agreed on a strategy for Afghanistan that will gradually turn over responsibility for security to Afghan forces. America and all of the NATO allies greatly appreciate Poland's contribution to the mission in Afghanistan and honor your sacrifices.

At Lisbon, allies recognized that the security of Europe can no longer be achieved by just tanks or bombers. Today we need defenses against ballistic missiles in the hands of dangerous regimes. The alliance therefore adopted as a core mission the defense of NATO territory through missile defense, a system that will be built in part on Polish soil.

The first NATO-Russia Council Summit since 2008 also occurred at Lisbon. The two sides came to a constructive agreement on a common set of security challenges in the 21st century, including terrorism, piracy, natural disasters, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and ballistic missiles.

Let me be clear, however, that these efforts at cooperation with Russia will in no way limit America's or NATO's capacity to deploy missile defense or other collective defense capabilities. Moreover, none of this progress we make with Russia comes at the expense of our principles, including our commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations in Europe and to NATO's open door policy.

To sum up, Poland and America are united in wanting a strong Europe and a strong bilateral relationship. Our democratic governments, regardless of political party, understand that our two peoples want this and therefore work to keep the bonds tight and expanding. We believe that good things happen when we combine our unique historical experiences, ideas and resources.

Sometimes I marvel at just how remarkable the U.S-Polish relationship is. Does anyone know for example, how many Americans of Polish descent there are today?

Yes, approximately 10 million. Out of a population of 300 million Americans, that's quite a bit. And some states, like Wisconsin and Michigan, are about 10 percent Polish!

Or do you know how many Polish citizens traveled to the United States last year? Actually, it was over 150,000, a number that includes *babcias* visiting grandchildren in Chicago, programmers at Google Poland going to their Silicon Valley headquarters, students on scholarships to Harvard funded by the Harvard Club of Poland, and tourists taking pictures of the Grand Canyon.

And while I'm on the subject of visas—do you know what percentage of Polish citizens receive visas? In fact, it's over 90 percent, and nearly everyone receives a 10-year, multi-entry visa.

You might know that Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Kazimierz Pulaski helped America win our independence from Great Britain. But did you know that we showed our gratitude by making Pulaski an honorary U.S. citizen—one of only seven in history—and establishing October 11 as General Pulaski Memorial Day in America?

Do you know how many U.S. Senators, out of 100 total, are of Polish descent? At least four, including Barbara Mikulski of Maryland and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska [also Kirsten Gillibrand nee Rutnik of NY and Bernie Sanders of VT].

Did you know that many Polish Americans have won Nobel prizes, such as Frank Wilczek for physics in 2004? Or that many sports stars, like baseball great Stan Musial or Olympic basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski, have Polish roots? Or that many famous Hollywood actors could be your relatives? Like Natalie Portman, Scarlett Johansson, John Krasinski [“The Office”], Leelee Elzbieta Sobieski [“Joan of Arc”], Gwyneth Paltrow or Shia LaBeouf [“Transformers”].

On a more serious note, do you know how much American companies have invested in Poland? It’s now over \$30 billion dollars, which is more than in many European countries.

You surely know that American and Polish troops have fought side by side as brothers in Iraq and Afghanistan. But do you know what other places they have served honorably together? Haiti, Somalia, the Mediterranean, and the Balkans.

How about the first U.S. President to visit Poland? It was Richard Nixon in 1972, and every President since then has also visited, a club President Obama will soon join in May.

You may know that there are many ways for Polish students to travel to America, including the prestigious Fulbright program, our new internship program with American companies for engineers, and the popular Summer Work and Travel program. But do you know which Polish President participated in an exchange program to the United States? It turns out President Komorowski traveled as part of the State Department-sponsored International Visitor Leadership program in 2006.

When I think about ties like these that bind our nations together, I realize that being U.S. Ambassador to Poland is one of the best jobs in the world. The United States faces many challenges around the globe, but the United States is blessed to face them together with a true ally and friend like Poland.